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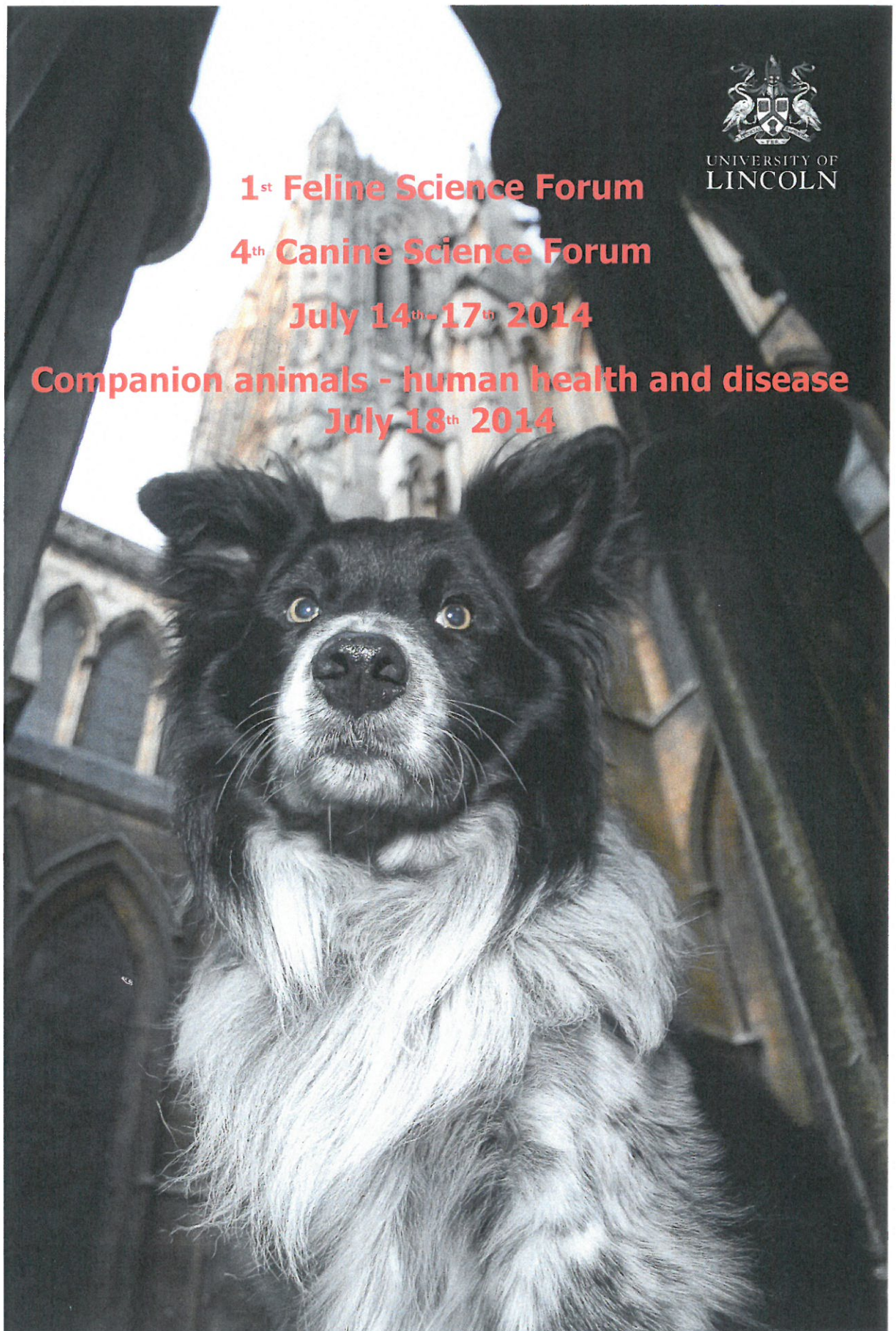
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The classification of interdog aggression and what causes it

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Aggression is a major problem in dogs, both in terms in animal welfare and for the owners. Breeds are prohibited and individuals are euthanised as a result of aggression.

This paper is based on an online questionnaire with 1,894 responses targeted at dog owners in Denmark. The purpose of the study is to investigate the circumstances that can lead to interdog aggression. This study examines whether canine aggression in general is evident or whether it is necessary to distinguish between several types of aggression. Furthermore the study investigates which dogs are more aggressive in relation to breed, weight and sex, and which dogs are more harmful compared to their aggression level, weight, and breed. Finally the factors that affect a dog to become more aggressive are examined.

The results from this study suggests that one should distinguish between fear-aggression, dominance-aggression and assault-aggression as personality traits within dogs. American Staffordshire Terrier (dominance aggression), Border Collie (fear aggression), Chihuahua (fear aggression), Danish Swedish Farmdog (fear aggression) and Dachshund (fear aggression and dominance aggression) were found to be significantly more aggressive than the average dog whereas the Boxer was significantly less aggressive. Smaller dogs (fear aggression) and neutered dogs (fear aggression and dominance aggression) were found to be more aggressive. There was significant correlation between the dog's weight and injury rate (fear aggression and assault aggression). Furthermore significant differences between the severity of injuries in the three aggression types were found. Factors that affect a dog to show more fear aggression, dominance aggression or assault aggression include breed, weight, age, sex, and reproductive status as well as the owner's age, dog experience, and training methods.

In conclusion the results indicate that to tackle the problem of interdog aggression advice that is specific to the type of aggression, and breed is necessary. Aggression should not be used as an overall description but specified more in detail.